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AUTHOR Schmidt, Margaret
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study, using data gathered through participant observation and interviews, explored the definitions of "good" teaching held by four student teachers in instrumental music. Aspects of each one's beliefs regarding the personal qualities, instructional practices, and management strategies of "good" teachers are presented. Their understandings appeared to be individually constructed from a variety of experiences with their parents, peers, teachers, cooperating teachers, and students--experiences which they explicitly and tacitly transformed into principles of "good" teaching. Each student teacher engaged in ongoing refinement of a personal definition of "good" music teaching, consistently filtering potential elements of that model. Their definitions of "good" teaching were influenced by university music education courses, but because of the strength of prior beliefs, each one learned a different version of what was taught. The paper concludes that: (1) the preservice teachers appeared to derive the majority of their teaching practices from their own experience as students; (2) expanding the range of each preservice teacher's experiential understandings of "good" teaching may contribute to more thoughtful practice; (3) effective supervisory communication requires far greater time than is usually allotted; and (4) student teachers appeared to seek an "educative community," a model of teacher education involving both partnership and process. (Contains approximately 80 references.) (JDD)

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DEFINING "GOOD" MUSIC TEACHING:
FOUR STUDENT TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Margaret Schmidt
St. Cloud State University
720 4th Ave. South
St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498
612-255-3223

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Abstract

In this study, I used qualitative data, gathered primarily through participant-observation and interviews, to explore the definitions of "good" teaching held by four student teachers in instrumental music. Their understandings appeared to be individually constructed from a variety of experiences with their parents, peers, teachers, cooperating teachers, and students, experiences which they explicitly and tacitly transformed into principles of "good" teaching. Each student teacher engaged in on-going refinement of a personal definition of "good" music teaching, consistently filtering potential elements of that model through an interpretive lens–the desire, as the student teachers said, to "be themselves" in the classroom. Observation of their instructional practices revealed that their definitions of "good" teaching were influenced by the University Music Education courses but that, because of the strength of prior beliefs, each one *learned* a different version of what was taught. The study's findings raise further questions about defining effective music teaching, and suggest the usefulness of qualitative methods for illuminating both the issues involved and the processes by which individual music teachers develop their own "good" teaching practices.

DEFINING "GOOD" MUSIC TEACHING: FOUR STUDENT TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Throughout history, the question, "What makes a good teacher?" has intrigued teachers and learners. Some have concluded that teaching is a gift or intuitive skill that cannot be learned (Britzman, 1985), but teacher educators and researchers continue to seek an answer in hopes of better preparing teachers and improving the overall quality of education for all students. In the field of music education, some researchers (e.g., Bergee, 1992; Krueger, 1976; Wink, 1970) have addressed the question by exploring the effects of teachers' personal qualities, such as "love of music and love of people" (Kirchhoff, 1988, p. 269) and "a sincere and intense desire to make music with their students" (Merrion, 1990, p. 27). Others seek to define characteristics and performance competencies demonstrated by "effective teachers" (for overviews, see, e.g., Brand, 1985; Grant & Drafall, 1991; Sang, 1984). Several problems have been identified in these attempts to define "good" teaching. First, consensus is difficult to achieve; Brand (1985) noted that "there are almost as many conceptions of effective music teaching as there are students, principals, music supervisors, parents, and music educators and researchers" (p. 13). Second, despite the fact that "everyone somehow 'knows' what good teaching is, [they experience] difficulty correctly identifying its component parts" (Madsen, Standley, Byo, & Cassidy, 1992, p. 24). Madsen and his colleagues found that, while teachers assigned fairly consistent ratings to examples of "good" versus "bad" teaching, their reasons for selecting those ratings differed quite widely. Third, preservice teachers' practices often suggest they heard something different than what teacher educators believe they taught. While beginning teachers may demonstrate "effective teaching" behaviors in isolation, they may combine those behaviors in ways that may "*not* produce the complete whole . . . anticipated" by teacher educators (Madsen & Duke, 1993, p. 6).

The conflicting or inconclusive findings of attempts to define "good" music teaching suggest that a change in approach may be useful (Elliott, 1992; Fenstermacher, 1986; Reimer, 1992). Rather than begin from observation schedules, questionnaires, or "expert" definitions of "good" teaching, recent research in teacher education suggests that preservice and inservice

teachers may themselves provide important insights about how they choose to incorporate or reject principles and practices presented in university teacher education courses (e.g., Bolster, 1983; Clark, 1988; Robbins, 1993; Wing, 1993). In this study, I use qualitative methods to explore the individual definitions of "good" teaching espoused by four student teachers in instrumental music. Following a brief discussion of the methodology of the study, I introduce the student teachers, describing their background and student teaching experiences. Next, I examine common and dissimilar elements in their definitions and teaching practices. I then discuss the influence of various models on their beliefs about "good" teaching and describe how the student teachers filtered and evaluated available models through a primary interpretive lens–the desire, as they said, to "be myself" in the classroom. I summarize the major findings of the study, and propose considerations for practice and research–teaching and defining "good" teaching–in music teacher education.

Method and Data Sources

The central concern of this study was to explore four individuals' definitions of "good" teaching. I sought to identify, not just each student teacher's observable behaviors, but the less directly visible beliefs and background experiences that inspired those behaviors, intending to develop a holistic understanding (Bresler & Stake, 1992) of each one's experiences as a student teacher. Because I could not discern at the outset of the study exactly what data might prove useful (Bresler, 1992; Spindler, 1982), I chose an emergent research design using qualitative methods of data collection and analysis as appropriate to addressing the central concern of this study (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992; Eisner, 1991; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

All four preservice teachers enrolled as student teachers in instrumental music at a large University participated as co-researchers in the semester-long study. I assumed the role of participant-observer (Spradley, 1980; Wolcott, 1992), spending at least one half-day each week observing each one in a classroom setting. Detailed notes were written and expanded the same day they were made, supplemented with periodic audio- and video-tape recordings of the student teachers' classroom practice. I met weekly with each student teacher for audio-taped discussions

and, the subsequent semester, conducted follow-up interviews; all interviews were transcribed verbatim. I participated with the student teachers in two weekly seminars on campus, led by University Music Education faculty. For the seminars, each student teacher maintained an unstructured journal (Knowles & Cole, with Presswood, 1994), which became part of the collected data for the study. Interviews with the cooperating teachers, University supervisors, and Music Education faculty, and records kept in my own personal journal provided additional perspectives (Spradley, 1979; Woods, 1986).

I analyzed the collected data primarily through processes of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987) and triangulation (Bresler & Stake, 1992; Mathison, 1988), looking for patterns and themes and developing categories to account for the data (Merriam, 1988; Spradley, 1980; Strauss, 1987). Throughout the semester, I formulated understandings and tested their usefulness in further discussions or observations (Bresler & Stake, 1992; Burgess, 1985; Erickson, 1986). Using pseudonyms, I constructed individual case records, or stories, of each student teacher's experiences (Carter, 1993; Elbaz, 1991; Merriam, 1988). Each student teacher read and made minor corrections in my reporting of his or her own story (Spradley, 1979; Woods, 1986; for a more complete justification and description of the methodology, see Schmidt, 1994).

Introducing The Student Teachers: Four Case Studies

Ben

Ben was entering his seventh and final semester at the University as he began student teaching. He grew up in a small town, the middle child of seven in an extended family of "sixty or seventy cousins." Ben admired his father, director of bands in the local schools, and from him developed strong ideas about music teaching. The adults in his family, as well as many of his teachers, taught him that boys "need to understand that they have some accountability and suffer the consequences for their actions."

> My grandpa had so much energy with kids. He loved to sing and tell stories. . . . He was such an entertainer, in a good way. He didn't spoil us–he had his lines–but he kept us occupied. [He was] a mixture of being a disciplinarian as well as someone who showed the flip side and did fun things too.

Ben begged his father to allow him to learn an instrument after Fourth Grade. He chose trombone and immediately began to teach himself to play familiar tunes by ear. His enthusiasm for musical experiments continued through high school.

> I'd yank out a horn [during study hall] and start playing. . . . Nobody else really tried to monkey around with different instruments [like I did]. . . . Anyone who had us do something spontaneous, that was tops for me. I loved that kind of thing.

Following high school graduation, Ben spent a year as an Engineering major, then entered a small Bible college. He eventually decided to "get back into something he had more motivation to do" and enrolled in the University School of Music. He worked eagerly in the Music Education Methods course, enjoying the process of "honing his skills [by] competing against himself." He was hurt when professors failed to recognize his efforts.

> I'd say my 3.3 grade point average shows that there's a tension for me. . . . I was disappointed a lot of times, because I'd see something I really wanted to learn more about, and I'd *throw* myself into the project, and I'd know in the back of my mind it wasn't that important to the grade. And I didn't care–I did it anyway.

Ben felt confident of his strengths as a teacher and was eager to begin student teaching. Previous experiences as a counselor at a Christian boys' camp and with a Fourth Grade Recorder class convinced him that he "really was cut out for working with kids." He expected students to challenge him at first but was confident he could give them the musical skills, discipline, and personal values they "needed." Ben was assigned to work with five band classes at Allen Middle School. Jeff, his cooperating teacher, involved Ben in a variety of activities, including faculty meetings, lunch in the teachers' lounge, and band concerts. Ben was pleased to experience "a family feel" among the school's staff and students, and to discover that Jeff encouraged him to experiment with his own ideas. While Jeff taught a class, Ben "kept busy," moving around the room helping individuals, playing along on his own secondary instruments, or writing observations in his journal. After the first two weeks of school, Ben and Jeff shared teaching responsibilities fairly equally, sometimes team teaching or dividing a class into two smaller groups. Ben was pleased with his placement: "I'm free to be myself here. It's a [very] genuine atmosphere, and I think we're doing what's really good for the kids."

Ben felt that student teaching was the pinnacle of his University education. He credited Jeff's encouragement and "organized" teaching for much of the success of his experience and felt that, "of all places, [this student teaching assignment] was the place he needed to be" to begin his teaching career. Although he was still unsure of many particular skills, he was confident that he could "capitalize on his strengths" as a teacher and find resources to compensate for his weaknesses. Six months later, Ben was hired to be the sole band teacher in a small, rural community, and was thrilled to find a job like the one he had dreamed about for years.

Gail

Gail was in her final semester at the University and 22 years old as she began her student teaching. She grew up in what she considered "a really disgusting, conservative town," full of "rich, spoiled kids," and she described herself as one who fit the stereotype in some ways. Her father provided a model to balance her "spoiled, lazy" side.

> That's the one thing I've learned from my father–a good work ethic. He's a really hard person to work for. He's even fired a few nurses because they're not willing to work hard. He has been harping on people for as long as I can remember, and now I finally understand–I don't see [that much] in kids anymore.

Gail was a successful student because she "figured out the system" and did what her teachers asked. She began trumpet lessons in Fifth Grade, but in Seventh Grade switched to French horn. Soon, her band teacher asked her to assist other students in her class. As a high school student, Gail performed with a number of adult community groups.

Gail enrolled in the University as a Liberal Arts major, believing that she "wasn't good enough to make it as a performer" and "wouldn't be a good teacher because she was such a wimp." After two years, she decided she "couldn't run away from [music] any longer." To increase her career options, she elected a double major in French Horn Performance and Music Education. She believed her professors recognized her hard work but were concerned about her lack of confidence.

> I have really good ideas, but I'm just not communicating them well enough or strong enough. . . . Professor Lawrence has mentioned [my lack of confidence] several times, Professor Fuller has been talking to me about it all year, [my horn teacher] has mentioned it for three years. . . . Yeah, I'm aware of it–I just am powerless to change it.

However, Gail felt "confident behind her horn" and hoped eventually to transfer that security with her performing ability "to the rest of her life." She had successful experiences as a horn teacher, working with small groups of students in the informal atmosphere of a summer music camp. However, as she began student teaching, she worried that she "came across as shy or just too nice" to be successful with larger groups. Gail anticipated that, if she "communicated her expectations and let the kids know the score at first," then "maybe she could be herself after that." By working hard, she had always ensured the success of her endeavors, and she intended to do everything necessary to be a good student teacher.

Gail was placed with three cooperating teachers, and began each day at Lincoln Middle School teaching a 45 minute Beginning Band class. On alternate days, Gail taught groups of three percussion students or five brass players, while her cooperating teacher, Helen, worked with other students in another room. Gail left immediately following that class to teach Elementary Band at two different schools with Eric Callahan. Eric asked Gail to observe for several weeks and gradually involved her in teaching his classes. He regularly included Gail in instructional planning and discussed with her his observations of her teaching. She appreciated his honest, helpful comments.

> One day, we were walking by this teacher [Mr. Callahan] really respects and he stopped and said, "Just listen to how he is commanding that class, the quality of his voice." That was different than just saying, "Oh, well, your voice is too wimpy and you need to fix that." He was able to approach it from a different way.

In the afternoons, Gail worked with Kevin Jones' bands at Central High. Kevin usually stayed in the classroom or on the marching field while she directed rehearsals. As the semester progressed, Gail began to suspect that Kevin lacked respect for her.

> During the rehearsal when I was not as successful as [Mr. Jones] needed me to be, he started rehearsing the band from the back of the room while I was still on the podium. Then he got on the podium and said, "Let me try," and of course made them sound a *lot* better. I felt like he just proved that I am incompetent and wimpy. Guess what–he's right!

The rest of Gail's student teaching experience was defined by extreme emotional reactions to her cooperating teachers. With encouragement from them, she eventually began to blame the University for not better preparing her for student teaching and to resent the expectation that she

follow a "super-human schedule," with "no time to reflect on what happens" and a prep period used for "driving from one place to another, eating lunch, and finding time to use the bathroom."

At the end of the semester, however, Gail realized that student teaching had indeed helped her "personality become more confident."

> I knew that student teaching would somehow help me resolve the problem I have with self esteem. . . . Maybe it's a negative way to get at it, but I realized that I deserve to be treated better than [I was by some people]. At least it's made me start to think that I have some worth.

Because she always "tried to make people happy," she was "puzzled" by the problems experienced with her cooperating teachers. She looked forward to having her own classroom.

> I think maybe I'll have a more realistic perspective. I'll know that my teaching is bad because the students aren't learning. Somehow the students will let me know. And I'd rather surmise it from the experiences in the classroom than have somebody constantly telling me how awful I am, in so many words or attitudes towards me.

The following semester, Gail continued her French horn performance jobs and worked part-time as a substitute teacher. To her surprise, she "wasn't just surviving," but was "doing some good subbing" and "actually enjoying it!"

Anna

Anna was a traditional student, at the age of 21 beginning her fourth and final year at the University. She could not remember a time when she was not involved in music. She asked her mother to let her begin violin lessons when she was five years old and piano lessons the following year. In high school, her activities and friendships revolved around her participation in theater, instrumental and choral ensembles, and her church. As a high school senior, Anna made a "logical" decision to major in Music Education, based on her interest in music, her "love of kids," and the fact she "couldn't think of anything she'd rather do." Anna described herself as a cooperative student who always succeeded in academic settings. Yet at the University, her high grades did not compensate for the secret knowledge she held of her own incompetence.

> I would sit there [in class] when they're talking about learning the score, and I wouldn't know what to look for. I just felt stupid, like, "I'm just not musical enough to pick these things out and it's not anybody's fault but my own." . . . And that's just my tendency. I wouldn't think, "Well, maybe somebody could help me with it," because I always feel like I'm the only one who doesn't understand.

She felt more successful in the junior year Music Education Methods class, which helped "affirm that [teaching was] the right choice" for her.

Anna worked several summers at a camp for elementary school orchestra students. She felt "lost" at first, but learned what and how to teach by observing and taking suggestions from the other teachers. As a pre-student teacher, she was overwhelmed by the effort required to teach Fourth Grade Recorder students.

> Often you're just busy thinking about the lesson, "What am I going to do next?" and evaluating, "Are they doing what I've asked them to do? Is this right? Are they learning notes?" And trying to discipline at the same time and thinking ahead–Ahhh!

As she began her student teaching semester, Anna was still not "one hundred per cent sure" she should be a teacher.

> It's so scary. Every once in a while I'll think, "I can't be a teacher. What am I doing? Forget it, I'll do something else." But I'm like, "Well, whatever else I choose, I'll never have done that either." It's just the unknown–it makes me really nervous. It's just a matter of trying to be confident, "Yes, you can do this. It'll take work, but you're trained and you can do this." But it's often hard to convince myself of that.

Anna requested a student teaching placement in Waverly, a small community with a "wonderful program" often cited as exemplary by the University faculty. She described herself as a "music ed sponge," eager to absorb as much as she could from her student teaching experience. The Instrumental Music classes were team-taught by four teachers who divided their day between the Middle and High School buildings. Anna was assigned, as a full member of the team, to work at least one period a day with each teacher. She assisted with Dan's High School, Seventh, and Fifth Grade Orchestras, Connie's High School Marching and Concert Bands, Ted's Eighth Grade Band, and George's Sixth Grade Band. Each of these classes met daily and, like the teachers themselves, Anna was "on duty" from 7:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. with a 30 minute lunch break, which included travel time between the two school buildings.

The four teachers had very different teaching styles and were quite open with Anna about their admiration for and disagreements with each other. Anna tried to adjust to each one's style from hour to hour throughout the day. She found she "wasn't prepared to feel so inadequate and overwhelmed" by student teaching.

> I hate the frequency with which I say "I don't know." No matter what class I'm in it is inevitable that I will be asked at least five questions to which I don't know the answer (usually like where I can find this music or how do I fix this saxophone or how much is a swab). Because I haven't been around, I simply don't automatically know how things operate, and saying "I don't know" about 50 times a day just makes me feel gross. It's amazing how three small words can have such a large effect.

The teachers often divided duties a few minutes before each class began. Anna wanted desperately to be useful but found it difficult to know what the cooperating teachers expected. She attributed this to her own laziness, combined with a real fear of not knowing how to do what she was asked.

> I don't know which one it is–lazy, chicken–they kind of go together. But it was sort of, "I'm here to get experience, but don't make me do it." . . . Once I would get up there and [teach], it was always O.K.–usually. It wasn't a horrible experience, but I would always dread it. . . . As much as I wanted the experience, I was always very willing for them to change plans and have me running copies.

Anna was tempted to quit at many points through the semester but used logical arguments, suggested by phone conversations with her mother, to convince herself that, "like eating her vegetables," this student teaching experience was "good" for her.

Anna believed that she learned a great deal from student teaching. She began the semester with very vague notions about what music teachers do and why. She admitted that for much of the semester she "just plodded along and didn't stop to think" if she herself would do some of the things she observed her cooperating teachers doing. But by the end of the semester, because of the stark contrasts her cooperating teachers presented, she had "really begun to establish a pretty firm philosophy" of music education. A few months later, Anna graduated and, with her fiancé, enrolled in a theological seminary to prepare for ordination to the ministry.

Jarrett

Jarrett was 28 years old as he began student teaching. His father was a truck driver and a jazz drummer, and he grew up in a predominantly black section of a large urban center. Although Jarrett "knew [his parents] were proud of him and very supportive," he "hesitated to oppose his dad's view of the world," for fear of the ensuing disagreements and disapproval. Jarrett took violin lessons in Fifth Grade but in Seventh Grade switched to trumpet to be in class with his best friend. Two years later, Jarrett enrolled as an Auto Mechanics major at a local magnet school but, by his junior year, changed to a Music major. The Music classes, while not particularly well

taught, inspired Jarrett to "become aware of all kinds of music." In the same years, Jarrett started to experiment with his father's drum set and developed an interest in jazz. He began percussion lessons several months before high school graduation, then enrolled in an urban university near his home as a Jazz major, hoping eventually to qualify for admission to a major music conservatory. After dropping out twice, Jarrett finally decided he "wasn't good enough to do music–period." By this time, he was married. He and his wife became active in leading the music program at their church. Although Jarrett's interest in music was originally inspired by watching groups like the NBC Orchestra on television, he began to feel excluded from the culture that accompanied "straight orchestral music."

> I felt like orchestra music was for whites, and this was their culture, and it didn't relate to my culture, and I got into some issues of race. . . . So I rejected the music too, because it was part of this whole thing. When I was younger, somebody could say "Beethoven," and I'd think, "Oh, wow, this is neat." And then it got so somebody could say "Beethoven" and I'd think of all these negative things. "Beethoven" was sort of a euphemism for prejudice and snobbery, and all that stuff.

After five years, Jarrett and his wife enrolled in the Music Education program at the University, believing that a degree would "enhance their ministry" in their church and in the city.

Jarrett viewed most of his University education as "something he had to do to get the degree," and "naturally" expended more time and energy on "stuff like jazz and whatever else might interest" him. He hoped, at all costs, to avoid becoming "the typical band director."

> The [typical band] director can be interested in music and trying to teach kids, but for the most part, he's not that exciting. Sort of out of touch with the instrument and with a wide range of artistic experiences–just sort of a band director. . . . The music is unchallenging, he rehearses the same stuff over and over, doesn't even have to look at the score, just prepares the piece for a concert. I'm real opposed to producing product, which is then presented, then you [put it away], and present another product. No music happens.

At first Jarrett felt the University program was "not applicable to what he wanted to do" as a music teacher in the inner city, and "didn't bother" with many of the assignments. He soon realized "he'd better [complete the requirements] if he wanted a job." He requested a student teaching placement that would allow him "to experience a wide range of races." Jarrett also hoped to explore his own suitability for teaching and learn enough to be able to teach well.

Jarrett was placed in a suburban city with a small but vocal minority population. Because of team teaching assignments, he actually worked with six different teachers in four schools. Four mornings a week, Jarrett assisted three teachers in two elementary schools. He recognized differences in their styles, but was comfortable with all of them. Sue methodically integrated Jarrett into her teaching routine, having him observe, giving specific instructions, and requiring written plans for each lesson he taught. Jarrett was impressed with her honesty, organization, and skill in teaching Beginning Band. Betty "put Jarrett to work" the very first day. She usually shared the leadership of classes with him, often asking him to teach for a few minutes while she took roll or worked with an individual. Jarrett taught one weekly 20 minute trombone class with Paula. He privately questioned some of her teaching priorities, but concluded that, as a beginning teacher, she was probably "just as much in the dark" as he was. Friday mornings, Jarrett led a Percussion sectional at Jefferson Middle School for six of Sally's Seventh Grade students. He was eager to develop a 13 week percussion skills curriculum for them, but Sally directed him to rehearse specific band pieces with the group, and he was unable to follow through on his ideas.

Every afternoon, Jarrett worked with Tom Carpenter at Washington High School. After an initial positive beginning at Marching Band Camp in August, Jarrett's relationship with Tom became progressively more difficult. Tom made it clear to Jarrett that, "as a student teacher, he wasn't really ready to teach" and would be "wasting time" if he led a rehearsal. So Jarrett observed Tom's Band classes, "roaming" through the group and helping individuals. He marvelled that the students responded so well to Tom's demanding "search and destroy" rehearsal tactics.

> I wonder why the kids stay there? It's a paradox. He shows them both sides, care, concern, love–but he can turn around and smother them. I wonder why they take it. I'd have been labeled a lazy kid or a trouble maker, and I'd have been out of there.

Ed Porter rehearsed the High School Jazz Band during the last period of the day and, although it was not part of his formal assignment, Jarrett volunteered to assist, usually sitting in the back coaching the drummers. He admired Ed's "laid out and logical" way of teaching jazz and his "relaxed manner" with the group.

Throughout the semester, Jarrett "alternated between wanting to [teach] and not wanting to do it." At the end, he described his feelings.

> It's still definitely a struggle. Before it was very negative. I didn't want to do it and I didn't think I *could* do it. Now, it's more a matter of choices. I *know* I can do it in the right situation. I just want to make sure I'm in the right situation that will allow me to do performance as well. . . . I could never go into a job with the sort of mind set, "Well, I'm just doing this to fall back on," because I'd be an awful terrible teacher. But if I can live with that sort of paradox, then I guess I can [be a teacher].

Jarrett admitted that he still preferred a career in jazz performance, but decided it was "more important and valuable to be an excellent teacher." A full year after his student teaching experience ended, Jarrett was hired to teach Band classes in an inner city school.

Data Analysis: Personalized Definitions of "Good" Teaching

The data from this study illustrate the wide variety of definitions of "good" teaching held by four student teachers completing the same Music Teacher Education program, as well as the wide variety of influences which shaped those definitions. Like other preservice teachers, each entered the program with notions of what constitutes "good" and "poor" teaching, developed during thousands of hours spent as pre-college and university students observing teachers and parents (Knowles, 1992; Lortie, 1975). These experience-based understandings supplemented, interfered with, or negated theoretical information and teaching practices presented in the university or student teaching situation (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Holt-Reynolds, 1994; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981), allowing each to create a personalized composite definition of "good" teaching. To demonstrate the idiosyncratic nature of each student teacher's understandings, I present aspects of each one's beliefs regarding the personal qualities, instructional practices, and management strategies of "good" teachers. Further insights are provided as I compare the student teachers' stated beliefs with their teaching practices, as I observed them.

Personal Qualities

Consistent with the beliefs of many practicing music teachers (Merrion, 1990), the student teachers felt certain personal qualities, such as humor or enthusiasm, were essential for good teaching, yet each defined those characteristics in subtly different ways. I compare the meanings each attached to two descriptors of good teaching they held in common: respect and community.

Respect. All four student teachers believed "good" teachers were "respected," yet their dominant metaphors for "respect" were varied: Jarrett sought "respect" as a mentor, Ben as a father, Gail as an authority, and Anna as a trusted ally and friend. Jarrett believed that a "mentor" was highly competent, less "distant" or authoritarian than a "teacher," yet not "too familiar" or involved in students' personal lives. Ben's concept of "teacher as father" was based on his relationship with his own father. Unlike Jarrett, he cultivated a close relationship with his students. Even when he "had to play the bad guy" in meting out discipline, he trusted the students would continue to "respect" him because they understood he was "looking out for what they needed," both musically and personally. In contrast, Gail and Anna wanted to be liked. They engaged in approval-seeking behavior that actually undermined the "respect" they sought from the students and cooperating teachers. Anna had felt "respected" in the comfortable roles of church leader and camp counselor but, as a student teacher, these roles no longer fit.

> I feel like a foreigner in a foreign land going, "Where do I fit in?" . . . A lot of times I sort of felt like, "Here I am standing here by myself, looking really stupid." And there were points where I could be with the [high school students] and talk to them. But at some points they were just having a good old time and I didn't think singing "Henry the Worm" songs with them would be exactly appropriate. . . . This is just a really gross feeling. I wonder if it's typical. (Anna)

When asked, Gail vigorously denied that the notion of "respect" was central to her ideas of good teaching. Yet, she frequently complained that the students or cooperating teachers "lacked respect" for her, and her actions in the classroom indicated that she expected to maintain autocratic control.

Community. Each student teacher expressed the belief that "good" music teachers develop a sense of "community" in each ensemble. Ben and Anna actively sought a classroom environment where students "learned to appreciate beauty in life." Connie, one of Anna's cooperating teachers, incorporated humor and team work in her classroom, which impressed Anna as consonant with her own definition of "community." Ben's understanding, derived from his small town upbringing, where music for entertainment and recreation was produced by "a band that was made up of relatives and Joe down the street," was reinforced by his cooperating teacher's emphasis on both musical and social values. One of the most significant experiences of Ben's semester occurred on Halloween.

> I stood on the podium and I shut off all the lights, and I told some stories that had actually happened to some close relatives. I saved the last few minutes for the kids to come up and tell stories if they wanted to, and all of them wanted to get up there and talk about their lives. Maybe six or seven kids got up and told stories. And when we got done with it, it was really interesting, because I expect the whole group got to know each other better. (Ben)

Personal contact with individual students was central to Jarrett's understanding of "good" teaching.

> I remember a young guy–he wasn't a high achiever or anything. But, the very first day, I was just starting my [rhythmic movement] sequence, just looking to get personal eye contact and things. And they were sort of stumbling with it a little bit, and he kind of smiled and laughed a little bit. I thought that was great. That made me feel good because we made contact. I thought it was very successful because it wasn't like [there was a distance between us] but we were communicating. (Jarrett)

Gail claimed to value community, yet paid little attention to developing relationships with students, either as individuals or within a group. She simply expected students to do their best work for the good of the ensemble. Neither Gail, who always remained aloof in a group, nor Ben, who always felt he belonged, ever commented to me about students who might feel left out of their musical groups. Anna and Jarrett, themselves shy and easily "crushed" students, were especially concerned about students they perceived as insecure or outsiders to the group. Consequently, what was a major issue in Anna's or Jarrett's understandings of "good" teaching was an unquestioned component of Ben's definition and of no concern to Gail.

Instructional Strategies

The student teachers' definitions of "good" instructional strategies were informed by instruction presented in University Music Education courses, tempered by models provided by their University studio teachers and ensemble directors, and by their own musical practices. Each student teacher adopted a number of strategies from one of their cooperating teachers; other cooperating teachers generally played a minor role in their instructional decisions.

I observed each student teacher employ, with minor adaptations introduced by the cooperating teachers or themselves, instructional techniques and educational principles emphasized in the Instrumental Methods course. These strategies were generally quite successful with elementary school classes. However, the Methods course had not provided a comparable repertoire of instructional strategies for ensemble rehearsals at the secondary level, and all the

student teachers resorted to the models of music instruction they knew best: their studio teachers and the conductors of the University performing groups (Krueger, 1985). These rehearsal strategies were not so much thoughtfully chosen from among alternatives as they were incorporated as the familiar and accepted approach to music learning (Britzman, 1985). For example, Gail's studio teacher taught her that a long, careful warm-up was the secret to playing her best. She persisted in leading at least 15 minutes of warm-ups in each 40 minute Middle School class, even after her University supervisor suggested it might not be appropriate or motivating for young students.

The student teachers also referenced their own learning strategies as those best suited to all students (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991). Ben loved to "monkey" with different instruments and figure tunes out by ear. He often attempted to correct students' wrong notes by singing for them, apparently assuming that if they knew what the tune sounded like, they would be able to deduce for themselves, by experimenting as he had, the necessary fingerings. Jarrett cited his feelings as a fifth grade violin student.

> I remember various things [about my violin class], which are all positive. But I also remember feeling like, "I don't read music." I didn't feel like, "I'm getting away with something because I'm doing this by ear." I always felt like, "Man, I wish I could read music." (Jarrett)

In his teaching at all levels, Jarrett consistently devised methods to check that each student was reading the printed page, not playing by ear.

Ben, Gail, and Jarrett each worked with one cooperating teacher who served as a source of instructional strategies, the one who most nearly fit their own definition of "good" teaching. Ben especially appreciated Jeff's motivational strategies: his stories, contests, and genuine concern for students. He also admired Jeff's pacing, working alternately with individuals, small sections, and the full band, in a way that kept all the students involved and on task. Gail felt that Eric believed in her. She was grateful for his specific coaching in her work with elementary students and often transferred his strategies to her work with Middle School students. Jarrett admired Sue's ability to cover a wide variety of material in a 30 minute Beginning Band class. He adopted many of her techniques and explanations, recording them in his journal for future reference. Anna received

only minimal direct guidance from any of her cooperating teachers yet, typically, she assumed the blame herself. For example, she noticed that Dan's groups were "accustomed to" his energy.

> He tends to get them excited–that's just his way. . . . And it's not *my* personality. So I have to take his personality and try and work with that, and it's really difficult. (Anna)

While Anna saw in Connie someone who embodied her own beliefs about "good" teaching, she also saw in Connie a competent "really truly adult." Anna still viewed herself, not as an adult, but as a "student"; consequently, she believed she was not able to emulate Connie's example at this point in her life.

Classroom Management Strategies

The student teachers, based on principles taught in the Instrumental Methods class, firmly believed that well-paced, interesting instruction would avert management problems. As pre-student teachers with Fourth Grade Recorder students, each experienced minor problems with students' behavior, yet made sufficient progress to begin student teaching confident of his or her ability to "deal with any challenges" the students might issue. However, having learned few specific strategies for dealing with those challenges, they were left to their own resources and intuition, resulting in considerable diversity in their attempts to practice "good" management.

Anna saw herself as a caring, concerned teacher and desperately wanted students to know that. In her mind, "good" teachers were "nice" and "fun," and she believed the fault for most misbehavior actually lay with her "boring" teaching. Her efforts to make class "fun" raised the students' energy to such a frantic level that misbehavior increased; yet, having established for herself a degree of empathy with the offending students, she ignored problems, even if they continued to escalate. Anna tried to follow her cooperating teachers' advice to "be more assertive," but she "felt bad" for actions she thought represented her as a "mean" teacher, "having to be the bad guy" with misbehaving students.

> I was informed by all the teachers that I'm going to have to nail kids to the wall when they deserve it, or I'll *never* have control of a class. That is just a really tough concept for me. I'm a nice person and I expect people to be nice back–doesn't work sometimes! (Anna)

In the Instrumental Methods class, Gail learned that "good" teachers communicate high expectations for student behavior, views shared by her cooperating teacher, Kevin. To convey their expectations that students would cooperate with the knowledgeable leadership they intended to provide, Gail and Kevin frequently lectured the students to "be more mature." Neither of them appeared to notice what I felt was a hostile response from the students. And neither appeared able to generate alternatives to their strategies of lecturing and pleading.

> Gail: I think the pace [of my rehearsal] would be smoother if [the students] would just shut up and listen to what I have to say. Point blank, you know. Because if they're talking it distracts me from thinking about what I'm going to say.
>
> Supervisor: Then how could you get them to do that?
>
> Gail: Keep them quiet.

Gail, like her father, believed that "kids today are walking attitude problems." She herself never suggested a relationship between her inability to meet her father's "impossible" standards and her own expectations of her students. For the most part, she was aware only that "getting mad" was uncomfortable and did not fit her understanding of herself. She described her reaction to a High School Band rehearsal.

> I'm tired from being so mad for two hours! They were talking every time I stopped. And they're just not trying! . . . If I don't get mad, no one takes me seriously because my personality is normally like I'm always laughing or something. And they're pushing me over the edge a lot–which is really surprising because I just don't get mad. (Gail)

Ben and Jarrett developed "good" management strategies more easily than Anna and Gail. When asked what contributed to their comfort, they cited incidents where they had challenged their parents or teachers yet recognized the benefits of, and even appreciated, the limits set for them.

> The reason I'm so harsh is because certain things are really serious to me. My philosophy is that of dividing the good from the bad, and treating bad as being bad. But then aside from that, accepting the person and treating them the way I know they can be. . . . I've got no interest in keeping a grudge against a kid at all–that's how my dad used to deal with me. Because even the worst ones that I've been dealing with, I feel like I'm in their shoes somewhat. (Ben)

Ben described both his father and Jeff as "good" teachers, who could "run a tight ship" and not be "pals with the kids," yet could "have a soft heart for" the students. Jarrett found it difficult to be patient, yet he believed a "good" teacher would control his anger.

> At Mitchell [Elementary School, the kids] were talking as they opened their trumpet cases. I almost thought, "I've got to to stop this," but you could see they were sincere, and they settled down. At Shaw, their attitude was more like, "This is my clarinet, and I deserve it, so teach me." . . . That got me real angry. It hadn't become a direct me-to-them confrontation, but I could tell if I said anything to them, it wouldn't have stopped at that. It was best for me to go in the back of the room. (Jarrett)

This was consistent with Jarrett's learned avoidance of conflict; his father taught him not to challenge others or in any way "draw attention to himself."

Discussion: Constructing Definitions of "Good" Teaching

Both research findings and teachers' personal experience suggest that as many differences as commonalities exist among individuals' definitions of "good" teaching. In analyzing this study's data, I focus primarily on similarities, not in the student teachers' definitions, but in the processes by which those definitions were formed. I first discuss three dimensions of their definitions of "good" teaching. I then suggest a correspondence between their definitions and their perceived ability to "be themselves" in the role of teacher.

Definitions of Teaching

The student teachers in this study did not attempt to emulate any one pre-defined image of "good" teaching. Rather, they endeavored to pick and choose from what they observed, heard, and felt in their collection of experiences with their parents, peers, teachers, cooperating teachers, students, and supervisors, as they each individually constructed definitions of the "good" teachers they intended to become. Their definitions were not static, but remained under construction throughout the semester, guiding their thoughts and actions on several levels. I identified at least three dimensions along which the student teachers' definitions of good teaching existed and acted:

explicit <-----> tacit

contemporary model <-----> internalized memory or ideal

positive ("I want to be like this") <-----> negative ("I don't want to be like that")

I give examples of each dimension and describe how the three interacted with each other.

Explicit definitions were aspects of "good" teaching described to me by the student teachers. All four student teachers deliberately attempted to implement these explicit definitions,

such as Ben's expressed desire to let students "tell about their lives." I observed that, like Gail's lectures to uncooperative students, the student teachers also acted on tacitly held definitions, apparently unaware of both their behavior and the source of it. Some of their definitions were only partially explicit: Jarrett remembered "various positive things" about his "nice" Fifth Grade Violin teacher. Occasionally, tacit definitions became explicit, as when Anna realized she could now, as the teacher, talk to the "popular people" who "intimidated" her as a high school student. When this occurred, the student teachers could then begin to explicitiy alter those behaviors they wished to change and deliberately employ those they wished to maintain.

The cooperating teachers, University supervisors, and University studio teachers provided contemporary models within the time frame of the study. Internalized models, both explicit and tacit, existed in two forms: memories of actual people and projections of abstract idealized people. The student teachers evaluated the appropriateness of each contemporary or internalized model, adopting those attitudes and practices perceived as comfortable and useful. With time, practices and characteristics of contemporary models, such as their University professors or cooperating teachers, were internalized and continued to operate both tacitly and explicitly. As the student teachers modified their definitions of "good" teaching, their assessments of certain contemporary and internalized models were also reshaped and refined (Knowles, 1992).

The student teachers selected positive models of people and practices they hoped to emulate; they also held negative images of behaviors they sought to avoid. Positive and negative images were derived from both contemporary and internalized models and operated both explicitly and tacitly. From their experiences as students, Jarrett, Anna, and Gail described a number of negative definitions of teaching which were more explicit than their positive definitions. Unless they envisioned an alternative behavior to counter a negative image, they often found themselves engaging in the very behavior they had sworn to avoid (Knowles & Hoefler, 1989). However, positive characteristics could be similarly vague, as when Gail or Anna believed that "stating high expectations" was sufficient for "good" classroom management. In these cases, the student

teachers lacked explicit understanding of specific teaching behaviors needed to implement that ideal, and positive definitions became as dysfunctional as negative ones.

An Overarching Definition: "Being Myself" as Teacher

The data demonstrate that the student teachers "learned" different definitions of "good" teaching than those the University faculty or the cooperating teachers believed they "taught." To partially account for such idiosyncratic learning, I suggest that each student teacher filtered new ideas and shaped his or her definition of "good" teaching in light of one central goal: to "be myself" as a teacher. This goal served as an overarching model, against which all potential models of teaching were evaluated and interpreted.

This evaluative process was particularly evident as I observed the student teachers weigh advice from others. All four student teachers welcomed observers and claimed to appreciate "honest" comments from their cooperating teachers, supervisors, professors, and peers. However, they appeared to define as "honest" those comments that confirmed their own perceptions, dismissing both positive and negative contradictory comments as misinformed. Sometimes, this personalized filtering process produced positive outcomes. Placed in a situation where he "felt free to be himself," Ben found many of his ideas about teaching supported and concluded he was "cut out to be a teacher." Despite his cooperating teacher Tom's comments that Jarrett "wasn't ready to teach," Jarrett discovered that "it felt good" to successfully communicate musical ideas to students and deepened both his self-confidence and his commitment to teaching. As Gail realized her appreciation for Eric's specific and supportive comments, she drew on her anger at the overt disapproval she perceived from the other two cooperating teachers as a catalyst to strengthen her sense of "worth."

However, the filtering process was just as often miseducative.[1] Ben's exaggerated confidence came from his perception of his teaching strategies as consonant with "being himself":

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[1] Dewey (1938) suggests three kinds of learning experiences: educative (those which make further learning and growth possible), miseducative (those which interfere with continued learning), and noneducative (those which have no particular effect).

Ben loved to tell stories and entertain; he saw himself as a "good" teacher when his lessons were "spontaneous" and "creative." This allowed him to discount his supervisor's suggestions that he more thoughtfully plan his rehearsals. Anna's unwarranted feelings of failure resulted from a perceived inability to be her "nice, fun-loving" self in the classroom, yet her attempts to adopt each cooperating teacher's personality made it difficult for her to identify, let alone be, "herself." Gail received encouragement from her cooperating teachers, as the semester progressed, to blame the University for not better preparing her for the tasks of student teaching. She eagerly accepted the opportunity to place some blame outside her "self," preventing her from confronting and resolving her often-misdirected anger.

While the women disputed observers' comments as frequently as the men, they experienced such disagreements differently. Ben and Jarrett believed they had the ability to resolve problems that arose, with or without advice from others, and confidently assessed the validity of divergent opinions offered about the "goodness" of their teaching. In short, they appeared comfortable "being themselves." Gail's and Anna's need for approval introduced a tremendous counter-pressure to their expressed desire to "be themselves." They said conflicting advice "confused" them. Anna usually saw merit in all proposed options and, paralyzed with indecision, took no action. Gail more quickly decided to reject ideas she perceived as either contradictory to her beliefs or incongruous with her "personality," yet both women privately agonized over each disagreement, feeling disloyal to the observer if they held to their own perceptions and untrue to themselves if they accepted the observer's opinion. Gail and Anna appeared to believe that "being themselves" would never be quite good enough. Suggestions to change a characteristic considered a basic personality attribute, that is, a part of "myself," were particularly frustrating.

> [The professor] worked with me and said, "Well, all you have to do to fix your voice is this." I thought, "Fine and good. You can show me how you do it, but that doesn't mean I can *do* it." He can tell me till I'm blue in the face, but I don't know *how* to change it. (Gail)

Both women ultimately chose alternative careers rather than summon the emotional energy needed to overcome the inadequacy they felt in "being themselves."

Summary of Findings

Considerable evidence has accumulated from studies cited here to suggest that preservice teachers' beliefs about "good" teaching are potent and tenacious (e.g., Britzman, 1985; Bullough, 1990; Holt-Reynolds, 1991, 1994; Knowles, 1992). At the outset of this study, because musicians often spend four or more years studying with one teacher, I anticipated greater evidence in music student teachers, compared to those in other subject areas, of what Lortie (1975) calls an "apprenticeship of observation." However, three of the student teachers cited either strongly negative or vaguely positive memories of their music teachers (Howe & Sloboda, 1991). Only Ben appeared to refer to a particularly influential band teacher and, because that person was also Ben's father, clear-cut conclusions about his influence as a teacher were difficult to draw.

These pre-existent personal definitions of teaching and self meant the four student teachers "learned" different understandings of "good" teaching from the same University program (Holt-Reynolds, 1991). All definitions of teaching, explicit or tacit, contemporary or internalized, and positive or negative, appeared to hold the potential to function in both educative and miseducative ways. The educative value of each image depended, not on the faculty's or cooperating teachers' assessment of the quality or appropriateness of the model, but on the student teacher's awareness and interpretation of it. Each student teacher consistently–and often tacitly–evaluated potential models of "good" teaching against a personal understanding of what it meant to "be myself" in the classroom.

However, my data also suggest that the student teachers' thoughts and practices *were* influenced by the University Music Teacher Education program. As they referenced models they experienced in the Methods course, I observed considerable congruence among the four in their elementary school teaching practices and beliefs. In contrast, the Methods course offered few strong positive models of secondary level instructional practices or management strategies. As the student teachers turned to internalized and contemporary models provided by certain University professors and cooperating teachers, I observed a wider variety of instructional practices. The greatest diversity of practice occurred as the student teachers attempted to fill the void of positive

models of management strategies. They most often drew on memories of themselves as children in families and, less frequently, as students in classrooms. These models were predominantly negative and tacit; consequently, the student teachers often found themselves engaging in management behaviors they found uncomfortable and ineffective (Schmidt & Knowles, 1994b). Even more disturbing, when the "familiar" routines of their parents and teachers proved ineffective, Anna and Gail doubted, not their strategies, but their own potential to become "good" music teachers.

Considerations for Practice: Teaching "Good" Teaching

It appears that, regardless of what teacher educators believe they are "teaching," preservice teachers do not all *learn* the same things from the same experiences (Veenman, 1984; Wildman, Niles, Magliano, & McLaughlin, 1989). My data support observations that no one definition of "good" teaching can be "taught" directly to preservice (or experienced) teachers. The wide variety of contextual and personal variables that contribute to each individual's understandings illuminate the difficulties the profession has experienced in attempting to develop and disseminate a definition acceptable to all music teachers. Fortunately, although the process of constructing definitions of teaching is highly idiosyncratic and context-specific, it "is not illogical, incomprehensible, or lacking in purpose," but is grounded in a logic which "can be explicated, understood, explored, adjusted, and built on in the quest to establish a productive, satisfying teaching role" (Bullough, 1990, pp. 358-359). The student teachers in this study continually refined or altered their understandings. Had I been alert, they gave ample indication, even in the junior year Instrumental Methods course, of the depth of difference among their definitions of "good" teaching–hence, of their personal goals for their preservice education. In retrospect, I could identify processes which challenged or promoted change in the student teachers' understanding. I offer here three observations for consideration in the practice of teacher education.

First, the preservice teachers in this study appeared to derive the majority of their teaching practices from their own experience as students, which they transformed into principles of education perceived as both effective and consistent with "being themselves" as teachers.

Therefore, expanding the range of each preservice teacher's experiential understandings of "good" teaching may contribute to more thoughtful practice. Three types of educational experiences seem potentially productive. First, preservice teachers may be provided with opportunities for guided reflection, such as journals (Bolin, 1988; Robbins, 1993) or autobiographical writing (Bullough & Gitlin, 1989; Knowles, 1993), to identify and evaluate definitions of teaching learned through their own formative experiences as students in classrooms and children in families. Second, they may extend those processes to a variety of other models: stories and case histories of others' experiences (Robbins, 1993; Shulman & Colbert, 1988), observation of teachers and students in actual or video-taped classrooms (Copeland, 1989; Rosenthal, 1985), mini-ethnographies of classrooms and schools (Beyer, 1984; Gitlin & Teitelbaum, 1983), or discussion with other preservice and inservice teachers of their beliefs about teaching, learning, and learning to teach (Knowles & Cole, with Presswood, 1994). Through guided comparison and evaluation, they may develop increasing ability to understand and respond to students and teachers whose perspectives and actions differ from their own (O'Keefe & Johnson, 1989). Third, preservice teachers may be provided opportunities to experiment with teaching practices in a safe environment (Wolfgang, 1990), to begin the life-long process of constructing and refining, from diverse sources, personal definitions of "good" teaching, developing ever greater congruence between their hypothetical models and "themselves."

Second, it appears that effective supervisory communication requires far greater time than is usually allotted it (Westerman, 1991). In the majority of supervisory discussions I observed, primarily due to schedule constraints, the student teachers were "talked at." Much "good" advice was miscommunicated when words, such as "respect" or "assertiveness," suggested different meanings–and different implications for practice–to each individual (Schmidt & Knowles, 1994a). Those cooperating teachers making the greatest impact on the student teachers' thoughts and practices listened actively to their expressed intentions and concerns, addressed those concerns and honored those intentions, and only then led the student teacher to consider alternatives (Gitlin & Smyth, 1989; Goldhammer, 1969). By participating in discussions where all involved make a

genuine "effort to determine the congruence between intent and practice" (Gitlin, Ogawa, & Rose, 1984), preservice teachers may develop their own skill in asking questions, considering alternatives, and proposing solutions that are both consistent with and gently challenging both to their definitions of "good" teaching and their need to "be themselves."

Third, although structural features of their student teaching contexts worked to prevent its realization, the student teachers in this study appeared to seek an "educative community" (Bullough & Gitlin, 1989), a model of teacher education involving both "partnership and process" (MENC, 1987). They hoped for a quality of relationship described elsewhere as "fidelity" (Noddings, 1986), "ethical caring" (McLaughlin, 1991), or "collaborative resonance" (Cochran-Smith, 1991). The fact that each student teacher established this type of relationship with one of their cooperating teachers highlighted its absence in their relationships with the others. When this quality was perceived to be present, the cooperating teacher's model and verbal advice became more potent positive influences; feeling known and accepted as "myself" appeared to make confronting alternatives to "myself" a safe experience.

Considerations for Research: Defining "Good" Teaching

The findings of this study suggest a full circle, returning to the question with which I originally began: What makes a "good" music teacher? Prior research has focused almost exclusively on identifying characteristics of "good" teaching which can be universally defined and objectively evaluated. However, both research and teachers' personal experience suggest that a tidy world, where "good" teachers are guaranteed through mastery of research-supported competencies, may not exist. Our collective inability to provide an unequivocal answer supports other studies cited throughout suggesting that the response is largely an individually-created one. Subsequent research could examine in greater detail the processes by which preservice teachers appear to create definitions of "good" teaching, suggesting curricular experiences to assist and direct that learning. Examination of developmental patterns may also prove fruitful (Brand, 1988; Harwood, 1993), as this study raised questions about the impact of age, gender, and personality

on the student teachers' potential to become "good" teachers (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982).

Lehman (1986) highlights difficulties inherent in attempting to define "good" teaching.

> Most discussions of teacher education include at some point a list of the skills, knowledge, and personal attributes that a teacher ought to possess. These lists often seem to be merely vast compilations of all the desirable qualities anyone can think of. These qualities are always good to have, but very long lists are useless because some traits are clearly more important than others, because strengths in some can compensate for weakness in others, and because no one has all of them anyway. (p. 8)

Qualitative methods hold considerable promise for more holistic exploration of the interactions among particular personal qualities, practices, and classroom contexts, elements which appear to support more global and intuitive definitions of "good" teaching (Madsen et al., 1992). Recognizing that we have as much to learn from preservice teachers as we have to "teach" them, we can negotiate pedagogical, personal, and research relationships that affirm the value of their ideas, even as we challenge them to consider alternatives (Cole & Knowles, 1993; Wing, 1993). In so doing, we need also to confront our own deeply held definitions of "good" teaching, recognizing the "virtue" and usefulness of such subjectivity for the research process (Jansen & Peshkin, 1992; Peshkin, 1985, 1988).

Teacher educators will continue to debate the characteristics of "good" teachers and cooperating teachers, of "good" supervisory formats and teacher education curricula. Such debates are both useful and necessary. Yet teacher educators must also continue to work with imperfect people in less-than-ideal educational contexts. While some situations in this study were inherently more productive than others, these student teachers demonstrated that, with appropriate supervisory support, even poor student teaching contexts became educative. Given this reality, I suggest that caring educational communities hold the greatest potential to promote both respect and challenge for diverse perspectives, to provide supportive environments for growth, and to serve as contemporary, positive, and explicit models for those striving to become both "good" teachers and "themselves."

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